

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

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R 100530Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2262

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2291

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BG, US, VS

SUBJECT: BDG ATTACKS ON USG

REF: STATE 107489; DACCA 2243

1. I CALLED ON FOREIGN SECRETARY FAKHRUDDIN AHMED MAY 9 TO PROTEST RECENT ATTACKS ON UNITED STATES, HAVING HAD A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF THE SUBJECT WITH IM AT A RECEPTION ON MAY 8.

2. I TOLD THE FOREIGN SECRETARY YESTERDAY THAT, ALTHOUGH I HAD SPOKEN TO HIM ON MY OWN THE DAY BEFORE, I WAS NOW SPEAKING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS AND I EMPHASIZED THAT THE STATEMENTS SUCH AS THOSE OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE FINANCE MINISTER THIS PAST WEEK WERE INCONSISTENT WITH THE EXCELLENT RELATIONS WE ENJOYED WITH BANGLADESH AND WITH THE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OFFERED BY THE US AND ACCEPTED BY THE BENGALLEES. I RECALLED THAT, ALTHOUGH I HAD BEEN AWARE THAT ATTACKS ON USG HAD BEEN MADE FROM TIME TO TIME IN EARLIER YEARS, THESE HAD VIRTUALLY DISAPPEARED DURING LAST YEAR AS OUR RELATIONS CONTINUED TO IMPROVE. IT HAD THEREFORE BEEN SURPRISING TO SEE HOW MUCH CRITICISM OF US HAD APPEARED OVER RECENT DAYS, AND PARTICULARLY DISTURBING TO FIND THAT STATEMENTS OF CABINET MINISTERS WERE IN THE SAME VEIN. I SAID I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HIS COMMENTS ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS CHANGE AND THE IMPLICATION OF THESE STATEMENTS.

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3. IN MY FIRST DISCUSSION WITH HIM MAY 8, FOREIGN SECRETARY HAD SAID THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT BDG OFFICIALS HAD SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED THE UNITED STATES IN THEIR STATEMENTS AND HE THEREFORE DID NOT THINK THERE WAS ANYTHING OBJECTIONABLE ABOUT THEM. AS WE SUBSEQUENTLY DISCOVERED, HOWEVER, FROM THE FULL TEXT OF FINANCE MINISTER MALLICK'S ADDRESS THAT HE HAD SPECIFICALLY CONDEMNED "AMERICAN IMPERIALISM IN VIETNAM," FOREIGN SECRETARY WITHDREW FROM THIS POSITION. HE STILL HELD HOWEVER THAT PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT OFFERED NO BASIS FOR COMPLAINT. PRIME MINISTER'S REFERENCE TO THE "PUPPET SAIGON GOVERNMENT" REFERRED ONLY TO SAIGON, IMPLYING NOTHING ABOUT THE UNITED STATES; AND THE REFERENCE TO "IMPERIALISM" WAS A GENERALIZED REFERENCE, A USAGE COMMON IN OTHER FORA SUCH AS THE UN. AS FOR FINANCE MINISTER'S STATEMENT, THIS HAD NOT BEEN CLEARED WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY AND WAS SIMPLY AN "INDISCRETION," IMPLYING NOTHING ABOUT BDG OFFICIAL POSITION. SPEAKING FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT POSSIBLE EFFECT ON OTHER COUNTRIES, MINISTERS MIGHT COMMIT SUCH INDISCRETIONS BUT WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE TOTAL CONTEXT IN WHICH THEY WERE MADE. WHILE WE MIGHT BE PUT OFF BY SOME OF THE THINGS WE HAD SEEN IN PRESS THIS PAST WEEK, WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT THIS WAS A SPECIAL PERIOD AND THAT SITUATION IN THIS RESPECT WAS MUCH BETTER THAN IT HAD BEEN IN, SAY, 1972.

4. FOREIGN SECRETARY ASSURED ME THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN BDG ATTITUDE TOWARD US. IT VALUED ITS FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH US AS MUCH AS WITH ANY OTHER COUNTRY AND HOPED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF STILL BETTER RELATIONS.

5. I WELCOMED HIS ASSURANCE THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN BDG ATTITUDE. I SAID I WAS CONCERNED, HOWEVER, AT HIS RESPONSE ABOUT STATEMENTS SUCH AS THE PRIME MINISTER'S WHICH WERE SUPPOSEDLY UNOBJECTIONABLE BECAUSE THEY DID NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTION THE UNITED STATES, SINCE NO ONE COULD BE UNDER ANY ILLUSION ABOUT WHO WAS BEING ATTACKED AND WHOSE "IMPERIALISM" IN VIET NAM WAS MEANT. IF SUCH STATEMENTS WERE THOUGHT TO BE ALL RIGHT, I WONDERED HOW MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT WE COULD TAKE THAT THERE WOULD NOT BE REPETITIONS IN THE FUTURE. NOR DID I UNDERSTAND WHAT THERE WAS ABOUT BANGLADESH DOMESTIC POLITICS WHICH REQUIRED ATTACKS ON US FOR "DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION." I SAID I WOULD REPORT WHAT HE HAD SAID AND HOPED WE NOT HAVE FURTHER PROBLEMS IN THIS AREA.

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FOREIGN SECRETARY RESPONDED THAT HE WAS GLAD WE HAD BEEN ABLE TO SPEAK FRANKLY AND THAT HE WOULD REPORT OUR CONCERN "TO THE HIGHEST QUARTER."

6. COMMENT: WHILE HE TRIED TO PUT BEST FACE ON BDG POSITION, WE KNOW FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY WAS HIMSELF DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT LEVEL OF ATTACK AGAINST US OVER RECENT DAYS AND HE MAY POSSIBLY HAVE WELCOMED MY REPRESENTATION AS

STRENGTHENING HIS HAND WITH OFFENDING MINISTERS. IF HE SPEAKS
TO MUJIB AS HE SAID HE WOULD, WE SHOULD PROBABLY NOT SEE ANY
REPETITION OF GLARINGLY OFFENSIVE STATEMENTS BY BDG OFFICIALS
FOR THE PRESENT. IN ANY CASE, WITH EUPHORIA OVER VIETNAM RECEDING
AND WITH PASSING OF "ANTI-FASCIST WEEK" HERE, CHANCES ARE GOOD
THAT WE HAD SEEN PRETTY MUCH THE END OF THEM ANYWAY. BUT THE REAL
TEST WILL COME WHEN SOME NEW INTENATIONAL EVENT OFFERS A
PLATFORM FOR MORE RHETORIC AND WE SHOULD NEVER BE TOO SANGUINE ABOUT
WHAT THAT RHETORIC MIGHT BE.
BOSTER

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